

**Steele Hall**

LeMoyne-Owen College campus

Memphis

LeMoyne College has its origins in a school for "contraband," former slaves who had left plantations during the Civil War and were arriving in Memphis in large numbers. The school, which came to be called the Lincoln School, was established by the American Missionary Association (AMA) in Memphis in 1865. The institution found itself in financial trouble after the war, however, and was rescued by prominent Pennsylvania physician and AMA member, Dr. Francis Julius LeMoyne. LeMoyne contributed \$20,000 to found a school in Memphis. The Lincoln School was reorganized and named LeMoyne Normal and Commercial School in 1871. In 1901 a secondary program was added to the curriculum. The program remained the only high school for black students in Memphis until 1923.

The college was established at its present location in 1914. Steele Hall, which served as Memphis's only black high school from its construction in 1914 until 1923, was for many years the only permanent building on the LeMoyne campus. Although Steele Hall has undergone some changes, it remains a key building on campus. The college, which merged with Owen College in 1968 and is now called LeMoyne-Owen College, plans to continue using the building. From its establishment as the only college available to the Memphis black community to the present, the college has served as a training ground for black leaders. (See also Second Congregational Church.) [A 3/23/79, 79002481]